

REMARKS

This amendment is in response to the Office Action (Paper No. 2) of November 15, 1999, in which claims 1-14 were rejected. Claims 1 and 8-10 were first rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the applicant regards as the invention. Claim 8 was also objected to for failing to provide the full meaning of a common computer industry acronym.

Claims 1 and 3-14 were further rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Bateman et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,884,032) in view of Grossman et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,436,965) and Srinivasan (U.S. Pat. No. 5,185,782). Claims 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Bateman et al. in view of Grossman et al. and Srinivasan as applied to claim 1 and further in view of Szlam et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,828,731).

With this amendment, claim 7 has been canceled and claims 1, 2, 6, 8-11 and 14 have been amended. In particular, claims 1 and 10 (the independent system and method claims, respectively) have been amended to more precisely define the applicant's invention which was believed to be novel over the cited prior art without the present amendment.

The applicant's invention, as presently claimed, provides a system and method for providing an automated telephone call back to a telephone line that is being used to access a computer network in a manner so as to contact an inquiring party as soon as possible after the telephone line used to connect to the network becomes available (i.e. after he or she logs off).

As is described on page 3, lines 21 through page 4, line 13 of the application, an immediate call back is often the ideal time for responding to a request by an inquiring party since the inquiring party is likely to be proximate to a telephone. However, providing an immediate connection to an agent presents an additional problem. Since many persons access the Internet/World Wide Web using a PC with a modem that dials in to an Internet Service Provider (ISP) over the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN), if the only available telephone line is being used for connecting to the network, an immediate call back may not be possible since the inquiring party is likely to still be connected to the network (i.e., "on-line") when the call back is attempted.

Therefore, a busy signal will be detected. When dialing outbound calls, existing telephony systems will typically treat a busy signal as a failed attempt and will schedule a recall at a later point in time. Thus, the inquiring party will not receive

the assistance as soon as possible after the request has been made.

The system and method of the present invention overcomes this deficiency found in the prior art by utilizing a call back campaign manager, call scheduler and dialer for making an immediate attempt to contact an inquiring party by dialing the telephone number of the telephone line that is being utilized to connect to the computer network and making continuous call back attempts until the line is no longer busy, which would indicate that the inquiring party is no longer on-line and is available to receive the requested call back.

This is unlike the cited patent to Bateman, which does allow for a call back from a call center but does so using a separate telephone line. The Bateman patent discloses a system wherein an interested party and a call center agent can view the same information on their respective computer screens while they converse. Because Bateman requires simultaneous voice and data connections, at least two communications lines must be utilized.

Neither Bateman nor any of the additional prior art cited by the Office discloses or even suggests the situation addressed by the present invention - namely, providing a call back to an inquiring party over the same telephone line that is used for

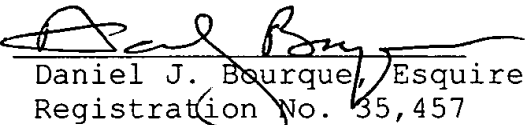
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network communications as soon as that telephone line becomes available. Accordingly, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-6 and 8-14 is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned, Applicant's attorney of record, to facilitate advancement of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

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